

REFLECTIONS

December 21, 2008

**And she brought forth her firstborn son,
and wrapped him in swaddling clothes,
and laid him in a manger;**

Luke 2:7KJV

The Gift God Gives

Reflections the past few weeks hopefully helped to recall a good neighbor in your life like John was in mine, and a humble servant like Odell, and an adopted dad like Jack. The difference they made in the lives of others gave true meaning to theirs. The tributes to them allowed memories to drift back to my formative years when my mind was like soft clay—so impressionable, so easily molded, so easily changed. John, Odell, and Jack played important roles in shaping who I am. But there is another one. Let me tell you.

He was an infant when he was introduced into my life. I was just old enough to have some memories of the introduction, and those memories still live today in my everyday life. He changed my life more than any other. Indeed He changed the world.

He was born in Bethlehem, *wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger*. That's the way the story began when Jesus came into my life. It may have been the first story I ever heard. I was too young to remember my first Christmas, but I imagine Mema telling me the Christmas story for the first time that year. The story of Jesus is the greatest story ever told. It's not a fairytale. It is true. God came into the world one clear and shining night in a manner never imagined for a king. He came as a common man...

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross!

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:6-11 NIV)

The lives we live shape the lives of those around us. The *Reflections* I previously shared about John, Odell and Jack are examples of ways we do it. Christ lived through them; and He lives through you and me. Our lives make a difference in the world. And the difference is not in wealth attained, positions held, or trophies earned. The difference is in the way we love people through Jesus Christ. It's the same gift God gives us.

“For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten son.”

Merry Christmas

Richard +

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